

NEWS RELEASE

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Mattoon Man Charged With Possession of Pipe Bomb

Urbana, Illinois -- Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois announced that a federal grand jury has indicted today a Mattoon man, Eric A. Curtner, age 29, with unlawful possession of a pipe bomb. The indictment alleges that on December 13, 2005, Curtner possessed a destructive device that was an explosive and incendiary bomb, commonly known as a "pipe bomb," that was not registered to him in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record. Under federal law, a "pipe bomb" of the type allegedly possessed by Curtner is classified as a firearm.

According to information contained in an affidavit previously filed in United States District Court in Urbana in support of a criminal complaint against Curtner, officers of the Mattoon Police Department conducted a traffic stop of Curtner and arrested him for driving on a suspended license. During a search of Curtner's vehicle incident to his arrest, officers allegedly recovered a 7 1/2" x 1/2"-wide PVC pipe with tape wrapped around it, and a 3" fuse protruding from the center of the pipe. The pipe contained a smokeless powder. Members of the Champaign/University of Illinois Bomb Squad subsequently determined that the device was in fact a pipe bomb.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

If convicted, Curtner faces a maximum of 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

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The charge is the result of an investigation by the Mattoon Police Department, the Champaign/University of Illinois Bomb Squad and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Timothy A. Bass.

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